

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 2, 2002

Contact: **Ricardo Lara**
(916) 319-2050

**LATINO LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS UNVEILS
2002 POLICY AGENDA**

Language rights, housing and budget priorities are top issues.

Sacramento, Calif. –The California Latino Legislative Caucus unveiled its legislative priorities for the 2002 Legislative session today. The *Agenda for California's Working Families* seeks to address issues that impact all Californians, particularly in the policy areas of language rights, housing and budget priorities.

“This legislative year has already proven to be challenging,” said Senator Richard G. Polanco (D-Los Angeles), Chair of the Latino Legislative Caucus. “It is essential during these times to develop a policy agenda that advocates sensible legislation and budget priorities that protect the most vulnerable Californians--our children, working families, seniors and immigrants.”

“The Caucus’ 2002 Policy Agenda is the culmination of many hours of hard work and dedication from Caucus Members,” said Assembly Majority Floor Leader Marco A. Firebaugh (D-South Gate), Chair-elect of the Latino Legislative Caucus. “This agenda represents a true commitment to ensuring a better quality of life for all Californians.”

The 2002 Latino Legislative Caucus priority policy agenda include:

LANGUAGE RIGHTS POLICY INITIATIVES

Principle: Ensure English language learners have a fair and equal opportunity to learn and succeed.

Legislative Proposals:

- Strengthen participation of parents of English language learners in the education of their children.
- Strengthen existing laws regarding teacher credentialing for English language learners.
- Provide adequate resources for student achievement to allow for a comprehensive assessment of English language learners.

(More)

Principle: Ensure that state agencies comply with the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act.

Legislative Proposals:

- Strengthen the monitoring and enforcement of the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act.
- Ensure that every Californian has the equal opportunity to obtain healthcare, start a small business, receive wages that are owed, obtain law enforcement protection, and access the justice system.

HOUSING POLICY INITIATIVES

Principle: Increase housing production in California.

Legislative Proposals:

- Provide homeownership assistance as an incentive to local governments to lessen and remove regulatory barriers to housing and, ultimately, increase homeownership opportunities.
- Increase the availability of funds available to build affordable housing through housing trust funds and local housing bonds.

Principle: Support efforts to provide special needs housing for our most needy Californians.

Action Proposals:

- Provide safe and adequate housing for California's farm workers.
- Ensure that California's low-income seniors have access to federal subsidies housing.
- The Latino Caucus endorses The Housing Bond of 2002 (SB 1227) and makes passage a high priority for the November election.

STATE BUDGET PRIORITIES

Principle: Ensure that the state budget is not balanced on the backs of California's most vulnerable communities—our children, seniors, working families and immigrants.

Action Proposals:

- Maintain the critical safety net for the most disadvantaged.
- Ensure educational opportunities for the most needy students.
- Protect our youngest Californians from environmental pollution.
- Fairly distribute cultural and arts funding to all communities.

Since its inception in 1973 with five Democratic Assembly Members, the Caucus has experienced tremendous growth. The Latino Legislative Caucus reached an all time high of 22 Democratic members in November 2000, including seven Senators and fifteen Assembly Members. The members of the Caucus represent diverse geographical regions throughout the State and bring a wide array of perspectives to the California State Legislature.

###